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SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/RSP/TC, G, OES/IHA
STATE PLEASE PASS TO AIT/W

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: **TBIO AMED SENV CASC ECON TW ESTH**

SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA: TAIWAN HEEDS AIT AND COMPLAINS
ABOUT WHO ACCESS

REF: A. STATE 15149
 1B. TAIPEI 03598
 1C. TAIPEI 03742
 1D. TAIPEI 03713

¶1. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) held a briefing for foreign offices in Taiwan on H5N1 high pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) on September 12. The briefing was given by Deputy Minister of Agriculture Dr. Lee Jen-chyuan, Director of the Center for Disease Control Steve Kuo, and Director General of the Bureau of Animal and Plant Health Inspection and Quarantine Dr. Watson Sung. Opening remarks were given by MOFA Minister Dr. Chen Tan-sun and Minister of Health Dr. Hou Sheng-mou. The briefing discussed the general HPAI threat (in terms of "when" rather than "if") and provided an overview of what Taiwan is doing to prepare. (Taiwan HPAI preparations are described in detail in ref D). After the briefing, MOFA Minister Chen pulled AIT aside to say that the briefing was called at AIT Director Paal's suggestion (as reported in ref b, the Director made this suggestion when delivering Undersecretary Dobriansky's HPAI demarche).

Netting Over Farms

¶2. Presumably also as a result of one of the specific suggestions made by the AIT Director when he delivered Department's demarche as instructed in ref b, Taiwan's Council of Agriculture recently committed 1 billion NTD (USD 31.2 million) to help pay for nets to cover Taiwan's chicken and hog farms in an effort to prevent interaction between wild migratory birds and domestic livestock.

WHO

¶3. MOFA Minister Chen also used the opportunity of the September 12 HPAI briefing to call for foreign support of Taiwan's efforts to work more closely with the World Health Organization (WHO). Chen reported that Taiwan had recently approached WHO's West Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) in Manila to request copies of the flu plans WPRO has received from other economies in the region. Chen claims that WPRO replied that it is not possible for the WPRO to engage in communications with Taiwan. Chen noted that diseases have no borders and requested international support for Taiwan's efforts to join the international body. (Note. AIT followed up with Taiwan officials and learned that the WPRO turned down Taiwan's request to obtain and review other flu plans in late August. End Note).

KEEGAN